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# The Changing Role of Civilian Advisers in Shaping Soviet National Security Policy

An Intelligence Assessment

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# The Changing Role of Civilian Advisers in Shaping Soviet National Security Policy

An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by  
Office of Soviet Analysis, with  
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## **The Changing Role of Civilian Advisers in Shaping Soviet National Security Policy**

### **Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 27 December 1988  
was used in this report.*

Soviet President Gorbachev's December 1988 speech to the UN announcing major unilateral troop cuts over the next two years is the latest—and most dramatic—manifestation of his willingness to take a new approach in national security and military policy advocated by civilian academic experts and, in the process, to challenge basic assumptions of the past. As he forges new directions he has turned increasingly to civilian experts for advice and ideas, allowing them to engage the military in an unprecedented and wide-ranging debate on issues previously dominated by the military.

During the Brezhnev era, civilian involvement in national security policy was highly personalized and informal, with access to the top decision-makers confined to a handful of senior advisers who headed academic think tanks—Academy of Sciences' institutes—and who depended primarily on their personal links to leaders. Gorbachev, however, has sanctioned several actions that have begun to institutionalize input from civilian specialists. He has created units dealing with national security issues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central Committee apparatus, the Academy of Sciences, and the Supreme Soviet.

Gorbachev has encouraged civilian experts to speak out on national security issues for several interrelated reasons:

- By encouraging a more open discussion among people with various perspectives and institutional biases, Gorbachev gets a wider range of policy options from which to choose.
- Allowing civilian views to act as a counterweight to traditional military assessments strengthens both Gorbachev's personal role as arbiter on defense issues and the party's control over the military.
- Positions advocated by the most vocal civilian experts help project a more benign image of the Soviet Union to the West and burnish Gorbachev's domestic image as a "peacemaker" at a time when his internal programs are producing few tangible results for the Soviet public.
- Most important, Gorbachev looks to his civilian advisers for the doctrinal rationalization for shifting resources to the domestic economy, a measure he regards as essential to the long-term strength and survival of the Soviet system.

By invoking Gorbachev's principles of "new thinking" to challenge the Soviet military on the field of doctrine, the civilian specialists have shifted the center of debate from the narrow military calculus traditionally favored

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by the military leadership toward a broader conception of national security requirements. In doing so, they are trying to move discussion to the political plane—where they hold the expertise—away from a detailed technical debate of military structures, systems, or tactics—where the military's expertise is greater. The civilian specialists have argued that the suicidal consequences of a major East-West conflict reduce the chances of an attack from the West and make any concept of "victory" meaningless. They have advanced interpretations of "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive defense" that challenge several tenets of traditional Soviet military doctrine, imply a reduced commitment to military spending, and argue against offensive positioning of Soviet forces. Civilian advisers have been the ones to advocate making unilateral cuts rather than holding out for mutual negotiated reductions. In making his announcement of unilateral cuts—which, if implemented, would virtually eliminate any Soviet capability to launch a short-warning attack against NATO—Gorbachev aligned himself with the arguments of the most radical civilian advisers.

The General Staff has been attempting to broaden the expertise of some of its officers to enable them to address the issues raised by the institute specialists more effectively. It ☐ is more frequently sending officers to outside meetings to keep an eye on these specialists and protect General Staff equities. While getting in step rhetorically with Gorbachev's policies, however, top military leaders have consistently reasserted many of the longstanding notions of Soviet military thinking—such as the need for parity with the West in both quality and quantity of forces—and have implied that the civilian experts lack the competence to meddle in military matters.

The military's approach of giving lipservice to basic rethinking of military doctrine while restating much of the old line was viable only as long as Gorbachev and the Politburo remained uncommitted. The changes made at the September Central Committee plenum, however, significantly strengthened Gorbachev's position in the Politburo and apparently enabled him to push through a final decision on the unilateral cuts he announced at the UN. The retirement of General Staff Chief Sergey Akhromeyev and rumors that Defense Minister Dmitry Yazov might be replaced make it clear that the military has suffered a major defeat in its effort to reconcile "new thinking" with traditional military priorities.

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Gorbachev may include more civilian experts in the process of Soviet national security decisionmaking and push the content of that decision-making further in the direction of their views. Changes in the *process* of decisionmaking may become evident over time in such things as:

- Greater access of the institutes to sensitive military information and the institutes' publication of sophisticated military studies in which the data are derived from Soviet rather than Western sources.
- A more prominent or more formal role for civilian specialists in advising the Politburo and Defense Council on national security affairs.

Changes in the *content* of Soviet security policy in line with advice of civilian experts may be reflected in such possible moves as:

- Cuts in Soviet defense spending along with the troop reductions already announced.
- Stepped-up pressure on the defense industry to support Gorbachev's civil industrial modernization and consumer programs.
- Significantly greater flexibility in both the conventional and strategic nuclear arms control process—including the possibilities of additional unilateral moves and further deep cuts in negotiations.

Such changes are still politically contentious and highly dependent upon the overall nature of East-West relations. But the civilians are pushing the debate in the direction of these changes, and the political leadership—led by Gorbachev—seems increasingly receptive to their arguments.

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## The Changing Role of Civilian Advisers in Shaping Soviet National Security Policy

Prompted by Gorbachev's advocacy of "new political thinking," civilian specialists have engaged the military in an unprecedented and wide-ranging debate over national security policy. While the process of developing civilian expertise on military issues began under Brezhnev and expanded under Andropov, civilian experts seem to have had a significant impact on security policy only under Gorbachev. They have been allowed far greater leeway to challenge previous assumptions underlying this policy, and Gorbachev is taking steps to institutionalize the input of civilian experts in national security decisionmaking.

Gorbachev and his closest supporters in the leadership have both implicitly and explicitly called for civilian experts to speak out on issues previously dominated by the military. There are several interrelated reasons for this:

- By encouraging a more open discussion among people with various perspectives and institutional biases, Gorbachev and his Politburo colleagues get a wider range of policy options from which to choose.
- Allowing civilian experts to emerge as a counterweight to the military on defense issues helps fortify his role as key arbiter and reinforces party control of the military, which eroded somewhat during Brezhnev's last years.
- Giving civilian experts an opportunity to project a more benign image of Soviet military doctrine and intentions helps improve the West's view of the USSR. In turn, this contributes to a reduced foreign threat and helps burnish Gorbachev's domestic image at a time when his internal programs are producing few tangible results for the Soviet public.
- Most important, by allowing civilians to argue that the external threat is lower than that posited by the military, that the definition of national security should not focus primarily on military factors, and that military procurement requirements should not

exceed a "reasonable sufficiency" of weaponry, he can justify a higher priority for the civilian economy in resource allocation.

Aleksandr Yakovlev, head of the new party commission on international policy, and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze have specifically urged civilian party officials to help flesh out the implications of "new thinking" for national security policy. Gorbachev himself has encouraged a rethinking of many long-held tenets of Soviet military doctrine:

- He has directly challenged the wisdom of a continuing military buildup in the name of "parity"—the Soviets' longstanding commitment to match or exceed Western military enhancements with additional resources of their own. As early as November 1985, in a speech to the Supreme Soviet, he said the United States and the Soviet Union "will have to reach a common understanding of what level of weapons on each side could be considered relatively sufficient from the point of view of its reliable defense" and argued that "this level of sufficiency is much lower than that which the USSR and the US in fact possess at this moment."
- In May 1986 he attacked military theorists who argued that the USSR needed sufficient military forces to establish parity with all likely opposing coalitions. At the Trade Union Congress in February 1987, he argued that Soviet military forces should be determined independently of Western forces: "Let us not repeat—automatically, without thinking—what imperialism is seeking to impose on us in the arms race."

<sup>1</sup> For detailed assessments of Gorbachev's relationship with the military and the Soviets' response to recent political and military developments see [redacted]

Assessment SOV 88-10040CX [redacted] and DI Intelligence [redacted]  
June 1988, *Soviet National Security Policy: Responses to the Changing Military and Economic Environment* [redacted]

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- He has broadened the concept of "defense" to include political negotiation. At the 27th Party Congress he said that "the nature of today's weapons leaves no state any hope of defending itself with military-technical means alone" and argued that "ensuring security is more and more taking the form of a political task" that "can only be solved by political means."

Gorbachev's statements provide guidelines for the civilian specialists and establish a framework for the debate. Gorbachev, however, needs the specialists to flesh out the implications of his ideas and to float specific proposals and innovations that can be tested through discussion and debate before the leadership decides whether to endorse specific options. Thus, while the arguments advanced by the civilian specialists reflect broad leadership preferences, they can also influence leadership thinking on particular points, and in many cases they probably go beyond the leadership's current thinking on other points.

#### Civilian Advisers and Institutes

For this task, Gorbachev has turned to a number of civilian advisers. Most have been associated with the Academy of Sciences, and three have headed the academy "think tanks" most closely connected with foreign affairs and arms control (see inset). Since Gorbachev became General Secretary—and particularly since about early 1986 when he began to talk more frequently of applying "new thinking" to national security policy—the mandate of these institutes has expanded into fields traditionally reserved for the professional military, such as strategy, operations, and the proper structure of armed forces.

*Yevgeniy Primakov*, director of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), was recently named to head a newly created Academy of Sciences Department of Social and Economic Studies of International Relations, while retaining his IMEMO position. [

] Primakov's new responsibilities will enable him to supervise the activities of all the foreign affairs institutes and to put his stamp on their work. IMEMO has traditionally focused on global economic

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#### *The Academy of Sciences' Institutes*

*Before the 1950s, Soviet political leaders—other than Stalin—had frequently traveled or lived abroad and were generally reasonably well informed about European affairs. They often depended on their own expertise for guidance in policy matters and kept abreast of current developments through their connections with Western Communist parties—especially the Comintern, and its successor the Cominform.*

*With the collapse of the Comintern and Cominform links in the late 1940s, the death of Stalin in 1953, and the continuing deaths of leaders with experience in the West, Soviet leaders in the 1950s and 1960s increasingly saw the need for a cadre of academic experts on foreign affairs. Several institutes were created within the Academy of Sciences to meet this need. Among them were the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (1956); the Institute of Africa (1959); the Institute of Latin America (1961); the Institute of the Far East (1966); and the Institute of the USA and Canada (1968). These institutes form a major center of foreign area expertise in the Soviet Union and, under Gorbachev, have been given an increasingly larger role to play in advising the political leadership in foreign affairs.*

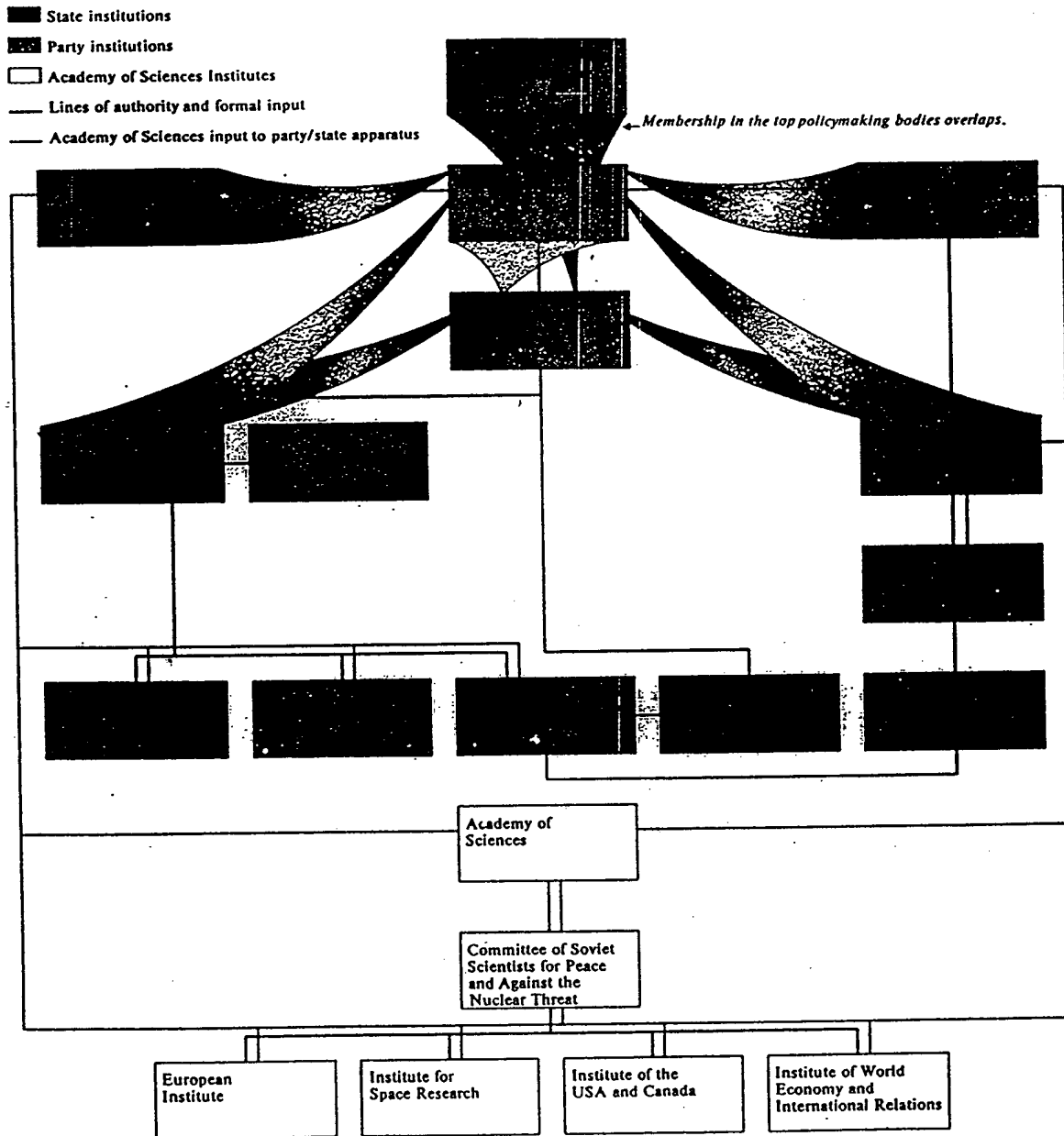
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problems but recently has increased its emphasis on military policy and national security. Most of the work on military affairs at IMEMO is done in the arms control department, which, [

] has 30 people, including 22 researchers. The department is headed by Aleksey G. Arbatov, who is also chief of a section on space and strategic arms. Nikolay Kishilov heads a section on conventional and tactical nuclear weapons, and Aleksandr Kalyadin heads a section on international security. Both Primakov and Arbatov have participated in the debate on military doctrine, and both have provoked sharp responses from the military.

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# Soviet National Security Decisionmaking



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*Georgiy Arbatov*, head of the Institute of the USA and Canada (IUSAC)—and father of *Aleksey Arbatov*—is a full member of the Central Committee with long experience as an adviser to the top political leadership. Although his political fortunes have fluctuated through the years, he still appears to be one of the most important civilian advisers to the Gorbachev leadership. IUSAC was created in 1968 to develop expertise and advise the leadership on US affairs. Since 1986 the institute has expanded its charter within the field of national security policy and has employed such specialists as *Vitaliy Zhurkin* and *Andrey Kokoshin*, who have been among the most aggressive in staking out civilian notions of military doctrine. For example, *Zhurkin* and two coauthors, *Sergey Karaganov* and *Andrey Kortunov*, have taken highly controversial stands on the nature of the threat posed by the West, and *Kokoshin* has used the 1943 battle of *Kursk* to advocate a concept of "defensive defense" that provoked sharp reaction from the military.

*Roald Sagdeyev*, until recently head of the Space Research Institute (IKI), has been at all of the first four meetings between Gorbachev and President Reagan, and despite his recent departure from IKI,

he probably will continue to be one of Gorbachev's most important arms control advisers.

He has obtained final authorization to establish an arms control think tank of 16 full-time people under the Academy of Sciences Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat. This think tank may be an expansion of a group established at IKI in 1983 in response to the US Strategic Defense Initiative, although it is unclear what it will do or how it will fit in with other elements of the Soviet national security and arms control bureaucracy. While IKI has traditionally concentrated on technical problems of space research, *Sagdeyev* has encouraged IKI personnel to join the debate on military doctrine and national security requirements, especially in the area of advanced military technologies. IKI personnel have participated with IUSAC and IMEMO in some interinstitute studies and have provided technical advice and expertise to the other civilian institutes. IKI has not taken a

leading role in the debate, but the technical competence it has lent to the debate has considerably enhanced the credibility of the institute studies and has enabled the civilians to successfully challenge the military's expertise in some areas, especially strategic arms control.

*The Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat*—an umbrella organization of the Academy of Sciences—has become a focal point for civilian advice and expertise on national security and military affairs. Having begun as a rather transparent propaganda forum in 1983 under *Andropov*, under Gorbachev it has begun to play a more pivotal role. It reportedly proposed the nuclear test moratorium adopted by Gorbachev in August 1985 and continued for 18 months, despite military reluctance. Headed by *Sagdeyev* and drawing its members from the Academy of Sciences institutes—primarily IUSAC, IMEMO, and IKI—the Committee has produced several reports on Soviet strategic affairs, including one in 1987 which argued that US and Soviet strategic forces could be cut by up to 95 percent without harming military or political strategic stability.

added 10 retired generals and admirals to the Committee staff and therefore will have much more military expertise to draw upon for future studies. The Committee is now functioning "almost as a Soviet counterpart" to the staff of the US National Security Council. While this self-serving claim for the wide-ranging influence of the Committee appears exaggerated, Gorbachev's statements indicate he does look to the Committee for counsel on national security matters. In a speech in September 1987, he commented favorably on work done by the Committee.

Academy of Sciences' Vice President *Yevgeny Velikhov*, a candidate member of the Central Committee, has participated in several of Gorbachev's summit meetings, including all four with President Reagan.

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As a member of the new Central Committee commission on international policy, he will continue to act as an important conduit of information from the Academy of Sciences to the top political leadership.

#### Changes in the National Security Decisionmaking Process

Under previous general secretaries, the process of civilian involvement in national security policy was highly personalized and informal, with access to the top decisionmakers confined to a handful of senior advisers. The heads of IMEMO and IUSAC, for example, exerted influence more because of their personal links than their institutional affiliation.

During the Brezhnev era, Georgiy Arbatov would task them to write papers, which he would then read and use as the basis of his personal comments to Brezhnev. The military, however, maintained control of the most important institutional channels of information and acted as the gatekeeper for the Politburo's defense subcommittee, the Defense Council.

During the Brezhnev years, the Soviet General Staff functioned as the secretariat to the Defense Council. It set the order in which agenda items would be considered, drafted resolutions for Defense Council consideration, and prepared briefings and background papers on specific issues. This secretariat function has given the General Staff unparalleled access to and influence with the top political decisionmakers. Several reports indicate that during his brief tenure Andropov attempted to increase civilian support for the Defense Council and create a body comparable to the staff of the US National Security Council, but there is no evidence that this plan ever got off the ground.

Under Gorbachev, the General Staff apparently continues to function as the Defense Council secretariat and so remains in a position to influence all decisions affecting national security policy. Currently, however, this influence is diluted by greater input from civilian bodies (see graphic). In addition to the personal access and influence of the institute directors, there is evidence that the political leadership has enhanced the

influence of the institute specialists. They clearly have gained more access to top policymakers and have been given a mandate to discuss a broad range of national security issues, especially military doctrine.

Since Gorbachev became General Secretary, they have had more access to high-level policymakers and more opportunity to provide their inputs directly to policymakers. This contrasts sharply with their claims of influence in the Brezhnev era, when they stressed the indirect nature of their inputs. Although their claims of influence are self-serving, the fact that the specialists have often predicted accurately the future direction of Soviet foreign policy tends to corroborate their access to decisionmaking circles.

Some of the articles on military policy written by foreign policy specialists have appeared in Soviet media where publication would require high-level political support. The most striking example of this was an article by Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov published in the party's theoretical journal *Kommunist*. The editors of *Kommunist* took the initiative to contact the authors after a similar article by the same three coauthors appeared in the Soviet magazine *New Times*.

The institutes are becoming more politically important under Gorbachev.

The foreign policy institutes had played a major role in formulating Soviet arms control policy.

A broader mandate and high-level political support for the institutes and the information they provide are also evident in the recent expansion of the institutes.

Kokoshin has been named to head a newly created arms control institute within the Academy of Sciences, perhaps attached to IUSAC. Zhurkin has reportedly left his position as deputy director of IUSAC to head a new institute on European affairs. Although it is unclear whether the new institutes will play a greater role in

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the formulation of Soviet policy than their predecessors, the creation of new institutes and the promotion of some of the most radical spokesmen such as Zaurkin and Kokoshin suggest high-level support.

There is some evidence that under Gorbachev the process of providing information to the top political leadership is evolving into a more formalized system. Aleksandr Yakovlev, one of Gorbachev's strongest supporters in the Politburo and head of the new Central Committee commission on foreign affairs, may serve as a middleman between the institutes and Gorbachev. He previously served as director of IMEMO, and several institute specialists have identified him as a conduit to Gorbachev. The membership of Yakovlev's commission as announced in November, moreover, suggests that the commission will be well situated to serve as a conduit from the institutes to the top leadership. Its members include IUSAC chief Arbatov, IMEMO chief Primakov, and Academy of Sciences Vice President Velikhov. Other commission members who may be inclined to support the specialists' arguments include the new head of the party's International Department, Valentin Falin; KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov; and Deputy Foreign Minister V. M. Nikiforov. Sergey Akhromeyev, chief of the General Staff until his retirement was announced during Gorbachev's December visit to New York, is the only "military" member of the commission. There are also indications that the chairman will be able to name other civilian referents to support the commission's work.

the new Supreme Soviet would have several standing committees, including one that would consider foreign policy and national security affairs. Such a committee could tap the same sort of expertise as Yakovlev's party commission. Primakov, Georgiy Arbatov, and Sagdeyev, for example, are all current members of the Supreme Soviet. work is now under way to provide a blueprint for committee composition and staffing in time for the spring 1989 election. Current ideas call for assigning one or more deputies to the committee and providing them with expert staffs to debate major issues and, in the case of

defense, to review those major programs requiring budget decisions. The committee could thus play an important role in debating key security questions, drafting legislation, ratifying arms control agreements, and reviewing the military budget and procurement process.

Those who were developing the committee structure had asked him to brief them on how the US Congress organized its committees. This interest in US Congressional committees suggests that the Supreme Soviet committees are intended to function at least formally in a similar manner, but, because Gorbachev serves as chairman of the Supreme Soviet—unlike a US president, who does not head Congress—these legislative committees would actually play a very different role than US Congressional committees. Rather than acting as a check on his power as General Secretary or as a source of policy options that compete with those he favors, the committee structure would provide Gorbachev with an additional lever to shape policy and legislation.

Gorbachev and his advisers have already created at least two formal channels for bringing the work of the civilian institutes to the policymakers. In the Central Committee International Department (ID), a political-military section headed by former Lt. Gen. Viktor Starodubov has been created to deal with arms control questions. Unlike Central Committee experts in some other substantive areas, neither Starodubov nor his subordinates in the ID have played a prominent public role in the debate on military policy. However,

the ID is now the most influential nonmilitary organization conduit into the Defense Council. civilian experts on security affairs seeking to maximize their influence have increasingly focused their efforts on winning the ear of ID officials. The new ID chief, Valentin Falin, has recently taken positions in line with civilian experts on some key issues such as "reasonable sufficiency."

In the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Soviets have created an Arms Control and Disarmament Directorate under Viktor Karpov and a research

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coordination center under Vladimir Shustov, an expert on arms control issues. **L**

**L** the research coordination center serves primarily to maintain ties between the MFA and the foreign policy institutes and universities and to solicit input from civilians on foreign policy questions. In a speech to the MFA Conference in July 1988, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stressed the importance of soliciting the views of outside experts. **L**

**L** the MFA had recently selected a specific group of younger scholars from the institutes to act as consultants. As in the case of the ID, the members of these new MFA components have not played a visible role in the debate on military policy, but they are providing comments to the political leadership behind the scenes and have become a channel for the foreign policy institutes to pass their views to the top political leaders

#### **The Civilian Experts' Challenge to the Advice of the Military**

There is evidence that the civilian specialists already have had an effect on several policy decisions. **L**

**L** the 18-month nuclear test moratorium was suggested by the civilians and that Gorbachev accepted the proposal despite objections from the military. Likewise, **L**

**L** current Soviet efforts to come up with a detailed accounting of Soviet defense spending is a result of civilian criticism of military spending and military secretiveness. The clearest indication of the civilians' influence, however, is probably the unilateral troop cuts announced by Gorbachev in December. Unilateral cuts have been consistently opposed by Soviet military leaders, as well as some of the moderate civilian specialists. In making his announcement, Gorbachev allied himself with some of the most radical civilian advisers.

#### **Doctrinal Issues Raised by the Civilians**

The civilian experts' greatest input has come in the public debate over doctrine. The Soviets define "doctrine" very broadly—to include a "sociopolitical"

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#### **The Nonspecialists' Debate**

*In addition to civilian academic experts, Soviet journalists and writers have joined in the debate on military policy. Most of them have tended to support the arguments of the institute specialists. Well-known Izvestiya correspondent Aleksandr Bovin, for example, has questioned the military rationale for the original SS-20 deployment decision and has criticized traditional Soviet military notions of parity. TASS military observer Vladimir Chernyshev, likewise, has argued that parity with the West should be interpreted more broadly than a calculus of exclusively military capabilities. Some writers, however, have taken a more traditional approach. Conservative writer Aleksey Prokhanov has argued that military affairs should be left to the military and has criticized those who "demand the immediate dismantling of the world military structure without the participation of those who created it, who know how it is organized."*

*Aside from the propaganda role revisionist writers are playing in portraying a more benign image of the Soviet Union to the West, it is unclear what effect, if any, these publicists have had on the political leadership or the course of the debate. The dissemination of their views in major publications does suggest high-level support for their participation in the debate on military policy and indicates that the political leadership has extended the policy of glasnost even to the previously closed area of national security policy. At the least, the wide-ranging public debate over national security policy seems to suggest that the Politburo has decided that the military will no longer have a nearly exclusive monopoly on providing advice to the leadership on military and national security affairs.*

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aspect more nearly akin to Western concepts of national security policy as well as a "military-technical" aspect roughly analogous to Western ideas of military doctrine and strategy. Doctrinal changes thus have profound consequences affecting the entire agenda of military decisions, including military requirements, procurement, troop levels, and force structure. Doctrinal issues, moreover, are the easiest for the civilian specialists to address because in doing so they can move the discussion to a political plane—where they hold the expertise—away from a detailed technical debate of military structures, systems, or tactics, where the military's expertise is greater.

The Soviet debate on military doctrine has involved several issues but has centered on "reasonable sufficiency," "defensive defense," and the impossibility of victory even in a conventional war. The lines of the debate do not break cleanly between civilian specialists and professional military leaders, but on most of the important issues the participants line up in those general groups.

Like Gorbachev, the institute specialists have emphasized that maintaining security is primarily a political task and that political considerations should be elevated above military ones in assessing the nature of the threat faced by the Soviet Union. For example, Vitaliy Zhurkin, Sergey Karaganov, and Andrey Kortunov have written that "the problem of defending states' security has outgrown the traditional framework of purely military efforts." Security derives from a complex of political, military, economic, ideological, and other factors, they wrote, and "the predominant role in this complex is played by politics."

The institute specialists also argue—contrary to what has long been held by Soviet military theorists—that victory is impossible in a war between the superpowers, even if the war is fought exclusively with conventional weapons. Pointing to the Chernobyl' disaster, the civilians stress that potential targets in a conventional war would include nuclear power reactors throughout both Europe and the Soviet Union, that modern conventional weapons are reaching the destructive capability of nuclear weapons, and that in any military conflict between East and West the destruction would be so great that any concept of "victory" would be meaningless.

In arguing that victory in war is impossible and that political considerations must take priority over military ones, the institute specialists attack several tenets of traditional Soviet military doctrine. First, they argue that the military's traditional definition of "parity" was too narrow and allowed the West to dictate Soviet military policy by committing the Soviets to match or exceed Western military enhancements regardless of whether such outlays were necessary to provide adequately for national security. Writing in *New Times* in November 1987, one Soviet civilian specialist cited former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to claim that "parity existed in October 1962" even when the United States possessed a "17-to-1" advantage in strategic weapons. He argued that "parity" should be "understood as the capability of the United States and the Soviet Union to cause unacceptable damage to one another." Accordingly, he argued that the USSR had "no need to take part in the arms race on a footing of parity."

Institute specialists also argue that Soviet military forces can be reorganized to reflect a more defensive orientation. In a landmark article in *Kommunist* published in January 1988, Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov stated flatly that the Soviet Union faced no threat of deliberate military aggression from the West. They argued that Soviet military forces should therefore be restructured to reflect a more defensive character. Similarly, in an article on the 1943 battle of Kursk, Kokoshin and coauthor V. V. Larionov argued that defensive operations are the most effective, and that Soviet forces should be restructured to emphasize defensive rather than offensive capabilities.

Finally, some institute specialists argue that, although mutually negotiated cuts in military forces are the most desirable way to lower the overall levels of both Soviet and Western forces, the Soviet Union could benefit by making unilateral cuts. Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov have argued explicitly that "reasonable sufficiency" involves unilateral measures as well as bilateral arms control agreements and have cited the conventional troop cuts made under

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Khrushchev as a useful measure that successfully diverted human and material resources to the domestic economy without harming Soviet security.

#### The Quality of the Institutes' Work

Available evidence suggests that the institutes have had mixed success in producing sophisticated studies that can effectively challenge prevailing military views:

- In the broad areas of US-Soviet strategic stability and strategic arms control, the institutes have developed enough expertise to challenge traditional Soviet military tenets. In doing so, the institute specialists can rely on voluminous Western academic and specialist literature that covers Soviet as well as US systems and concepts. Moreover, on some of the technological issues such as verification or weapons based on new technologies, some of the academics and scientists may, in fact, have more expertise than their military counterparts.
- In the complex fields of conventional military operations and requirements for conventional force size, structure, and war-fighting capabilities, however, the institutes have less expertise and access to information that would enable them to credibly challenge the assessments made by the General Staff.

When the institute specialists have written about or discussed conventional military affairs—especially the concept of “defensive defense”—they usually have done so only in general terms, and their work has seemed unsophisticated.

One reason for the low quality of the institutes' work is that the Soviet military still retains control of sensitive information. Studies by IMEMO and IUSAC still rely primarily—if not exclusively—on data derived from open Western sources. In late 1987 a study by IMEMO on parameters for a NATO-Warsaw Pact military balance had to exclude chemical weapons because IMEMO could not get sufficient data on either US or Soviet arsenals. In May 1988 data on Soviet conventional forces were still largely unavailable outside the military. the General Staff has tried to keep information away from specialists who have criticized the military.

If leadership attention to the work of the institutes persists, however, over time they will be able to chip away at the military's domination of information and to build up a cadre of experienced military analysts capable of competing with General Staff researchers. Both IMEMO and IUSAC already have a few retired military officers on their staffs. In the future, the institutes may be able to draw other officers from the KGB and the military who are experienced in military-political issues. Col. Gen. V. Arapov, first deputy chief of the Main Personnel Directorate, had received over 9,000 letters concerning officer assignments and the effects of the INF Treaty on officer retention. Many of the letters requested early discharge. Soviet press reports have indicated that, since the INF Treaty was signed, many officers in the units affected by the treaty are being “encouraged” to resign. Others are being reassigned to lower positions, frequently involving a demotion. With the additional reductions in manpower announced by Gorbachev in December, even more experienced military officers will be looking for new jobs. An offer from one of the Moscow institutes probably would be attractive to many of those officers; the institutes probably could choose from among the best to develop the military expertise they still need. As the institute specialists learn more

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about defense issues and defense spending, and as long as they retain Politburo backing in their efforts, their influence is likely to grow. (

#### The Military's Response

##### Addressing Gorbachev's Concerns

Soviet military officials apparently had concluded that the best way to parry the institute specialists' challenge was to take up the rhetoric of Gorbachev's "new thinking" and move it in the direction they thought best. They asserted [ that they were responsive in principle to the political leadership's demands to reconsider important aspects of Soviet military doctrine:

- In his first meeting with Secretary of Defense Carlucci, Defense Minister Dmitriy Yazov said that "at first" the Soviet military had not taken seriously the political requirement to adopt a defensive doctrine, "but now we do." Yazov said that the Soviets were in the process of revising their manuals and that the changes in doctrine would become evident in Soviet exercises.
- Former Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev said during his July 1988 tour of the United States that the new doctrine had been worked out in the Defense Council, and he repeated Yazov's claim that changes were now being implemented and would become evident in Soviet exercises.

- [ the Soviets are now in the process of revising their doctrine to implement the tenets of "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive defense."

Soviet military writings in the last few years, moreover, have given increasing attention to the possibility that a war between East and West might be fought exclusively with conventional weapons, and in a number of their exercises the Soviets have paid greater attention to the problems of defensive operations. This indicates that the General Staff was independently considering some important changes in military doctrine that predate but nevertheless broadly coincide

with parts of Gorbachev's agenda. Some aspects of this military rethinking of doctrine probably have been picked up by the institute specialists and political leadership and form the basis for a civilian-military agreement on the need to reconsider some traditional notions of Soviet military policy.

[ Gorbachev, with the support of other Politburo leaders, has already directed the General Staff to consider the implications of the impossibility of victory in a nuclear war and to make recommendations in this light, both in terms of weapons procurement, force size, structure, and posture and in terms of a strategy for the political leadership to follow. [ while the military is centrally involved in the process of redefining Soviet doctrine, much of the conceptual work is now being done on an interagency basis in conjunction with the MFA and the academic institutes. (

The military hierarchy, however, has clearly recognized that the threat to its priorities posed by the civilian experts is a mortal one that cannot be evaded or glossed over, but must be met on the plane of political debate. Thus, the General Staff has been attempting to broaden the expertise of some of its officers to enable them to better address the issues raised by the institute specialists. It is also [ sending its officers more frequently to meetings held at the MFA to keep an eye on the civilian experts and guard General Staff equities. [

[ Soviet military officers are increasingly being assigned to the MFA. Western academics have reported that they have noted more willingness of General Staff officers to meet with them to discuss Soviet arms control and defense policy. [

### Holding the Line on Doctrine

While seemingly getting in step with Gorbachev by supporting his arms control program and agreeing that a reappraisal of doctrine and tactics is warranted, the military has nevertheless been loath to relinquish many cherished principles of military doctrine or to share the job of determining the content of doctrine with civilian specialists. Military leaders have continued to bristle at what they view as civilian meddling in military affairs and to assert many of the traditional notions of Soviet military thinking even while often finding it expedient to advance their arguments in the language of "new thinking."

The military's current assessment asserts—in contrast to that of some academics—that the West continues to pose a serious military threat to the Soviet Union and that the only appropriate Soviet response is to maintain a military parity with the West as traditionally understood—in both quantity and quality of forces—and vigorous offensive or "counteroffensive" capabilities:

- After the party conference in June 1988, Yazov and Akhromeyev—apparently under increasing pressure from Gorbachev—had grudgingly begun defining parity more in qualitative than quantitative terms. Before that time, they both had repeatedly stated that the level of Soviet forces was determined by the level of Western forces and had spoken forcefully against making any unilateral cuts. In an article appearing the day before Gorbachev's unilateral troop cut announcement, Akhromeyev reiterated his concerns.
- Air Defense Commander in Chief Ivan Tret'yak, apparently a confidant of Defense Minister Yazov, has been particularly forceful in rejecting any notion of purely "defensive defense" or unilateral force cuts. In an interview published in February 1988, he said that, while Soviet military operations would be "mostly defensive," defense was not enough "to smash the enemy. So the troops have also to be well versed in the art of attack." He said the troop cuts made under Khrushchev—cited by the institute specialists as a good cost-cutting measure—had been a "terrible blow" to the USSR's defense capability, one the military was still feeling, and

argued strongly that, in spite of the "lure of temporary benefits," any changes in the military should be considered "a thousand times."

- Deputy Chief of the General Staff Makhmut Gareyev, formerly chief of the Military Science Directorate and now the deputy probably charged with oversight of doctrinal issues, echoed Tret'yak's comments recently in a pamphlet on Soviet military science. Gareyev argued that, contrary to the assertions of the institute specialists, the threat of war from the West remains a real danger to the Soviet Union and stated that "it is inadmissible when articles published in our press voice judgments on the desirability of our unilateral disarmament."

• [

], dismissed the ideas of the institute specialists regarding "reasonable sufficiency," unilateral cuts, and "defensive defense." He argued instead for maintaining parity with the West and said that future Soviet defensive operations would not be "passive" but would include the capability to carry out offensive operations.

One of the most comprehensive rebuttals of the civilian specialists' views appeared in the September 1988 issue of *Kommunist*. The authors of the article—Chervov's deputy Maj. Gen. Yuriy Lebedev and Candidate of Historical Sciences Aleksey Podberezkin—played down the usefulness of unilateral cuts in Soviet forces and launched a broadside against the civilians. While acknowledging that military-technical considerations alone are insufficient to determine force levels and that political considerations dominate purely military ones, the article argued that the West remains a significant military threat to the Soviet Union and that the current military parity between East and West must be maintained until overall force levels can be reduced on a mutual basis. The authors explicitly criticized the institute specialists for their "rash" proposals and, in extraordinarily harsh and insulting language for a Soviet journal, pointed to

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"the inadequate training of political scientists in questions of military doctrine" and the "lack of professionalism," stating that "some of the people drawn into the discussion . . . had only a very vague notion of the subject under discussion."

#### Giving Ground in Controlling Information

Despite their animosity toward the civilians, military leaders have made some limited moves toward sharing information with the civilian institutes:

- Both IUSAC and IMEMO have retired military officers on their staffs, and in early 1987 [ ] the institutes were participating in some war games.

- In explaining [ ] In late 1987 the results of a study on strategic stability conducted by the Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace, [ ] said that some of the information in the study was provided by the military

In the future the institutes are likely to have more access to information on the military. Several Soviet officials, including Gorbachev, have said that the Soviets are now working to compile a public accounting of Soviet defense expenditures that can reasonably be compared with Western spending levels. Some officials, including Gareyev, have also indicated that the Soviet Union intends to make available more information on the military—including specifics about the number of personnel and the strength of units. Much of this information could become available to the institutes if the United States and the Soviet Union exchange data on conventional forces as part of the arms control process.

The institutes, nevertheless, remain hampered for now by the military's control of sensitive information and willingness to use this lever to limit the civilians' ability to challenge military assessments. [ ]

[ ] recently accused the General Staff of withholding information from the institutes because of dissatisfaction with the proposal. [ ] civilian

specialists had been making with regard to arms control and such questions as threat perception. [ ]

Even after the information is made available to the civilians, the General Staff retains considerable control over how that information is used, thus further restricting the civilians' ability to get their message across. [ ]

#### Outlook

Although there probably have been few formal changes in Soviet national security decisionmaking or in the institutional process of formulating military doctrine, there has been a dramatic change in the policy. Moreover, the political reform process now under way is helping provide an institutional framework for civilian involvement on defense issues. It is likely that either the Supreme Soviet committee on national security issues or the Central Committee commission on international policy will draw civilian experts into their staffs, or turn to the institutes for support in generating policy options. Former Secretary Anatoliy Dobrynin, his deputy at the ID Vadim Zagladin, and Akhromeyev have reportedly become advisers to Gorbachev in his new capacity as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium. They could serve as an additional conduit for advice in national security decisionmaking

Because the General Staff retains control of most sensitive military information and has most of the expertise on military affairs, the military leadership still has some room to maneuver. But the military's

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approach of giving lipservice to the need for basic rethinking of doctrine and national security policy while restating much of the old line is no longer viable. With Gorbachev's strengthened political position after the September plenum, his endorsement of some of the most radical civilian ideas at the December UN speech, the resignation of Akhromeyev, and rumors that Yazov might also be replaced, it seems likely that Gorbachev is well positioned to continue his push for changes in the process of national security decisionmaking and that the content of that decision-making will increasingly reflect the ideas of the civilian specialists.

Changes in the *process* may become evident over time in such things as:

- Greater access of the institutes to sensitive military information and the institutes' publication of sophisticated military studies in which the data are derived from Soviet rather than Western sources.
- A more prominent or more formal role of civilian specialists in advising the Politburo and Defense Council on national security affairs.

Changes in the *content* of Soviet security policy in line with civilian advice may be reflected in such possible moves as:

- Cuts in Soviet defense spending along with the unilateral troop cuts already announced.
- Stepped-up pressure on the defense industry to support Gorbachev's civil industrial modernization and consumer programs.
- Significantly greater flexibility and initiative in both the conventional and strategic nuclear arms control process—including the possibilities of additional unilateral moves and further deep cuts in negotiations.

Such changes are still politically contentious and highly dependent upon the overall nature of East-West relations. The civilians are nevertheless pushing the debate in the direction of these changes, and the political leadership—led by Gorbachev—seems increasingly receptive to the civilians' arguments.

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## Appendix A

### IUSAC and IMEMO: Organization and Key Personnel

#### Institute of the USA and Canada (IUSAC)

##### Director:

Georgiy A. Arbatov

##### Deputy Directors:

Radomir G. Bogdanov

Viktor A. Kremenyuk

Vasiliy F. Ponomarev

Georgiy Ye. Skorov

Sergey M. Plekhanov

Anatoliy A. Porokhovskiy

Viktor B. Spandar'yan

##### Executive Secretary, Foreign Relations:

Konstantin K. Shuminskiy

##### Scientific Secretary, Foreign Relations:

Vladimir N. Krest'yanov

##### Scientific Secretary, Domestic Affairs:

Igor L. Orlenkov

##### Chief, Canada Department:

Leon A. Bagramov

##### Chief, Economics Department:

Lev N. Karpov

##### Chief, Foreign Policy Department:

Genrikh A. Trofimenko

##### Chief, Domestic Political Department:

Unknown

##### Chief, International Economic Relations Department:

Mikhail I. Zakhmatov

##### Chief, Political Military Department:

Aleksey A. Vasil'yev

##### Chief, Social and Ideological Problems Department:

Yuriy A. Zamoshkin

##### Chief, Library:

Irina M. Kaptsova

##### Chairman, Party Committee:

Aleksandr K. Kislov

##### Chairman, Komsomol Committee:

Andrey V. Nikoforov

##### Chief Editors:

Valentin M. Berezhkov and Nikolay D.  
Turkatenko

##### Chief, Conflict Resolution Department:

Unknown

#### Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)

##### Director:

Yevgeniy M. Primakov

##### Deputy Directors:

Oleg N. Bykov

Igor Ye. Gur'yev

Vladlen A. Martynov

Vladimir I. Strigachev

##### Scientific Secretary:

Vladimir B. Yakubovskiy

##### Chief, Economics and Politics of Developing

##### Countries Department:

Georgiy I. Mirskiy

##### Chief, Foreign Economic Relations of Capitalist

##### Countries Department:

Margarita M. Maksimova

Chief, General Problems of Imperialism and Critique of Bourgeois Economic Theories Department:  
Abram B. Mileyskiy

Chief, Industrial-Agrarian Complexes Department:  
Unknown

Chief, Industrial Economics Department:  
Yuriy V. Kurenkov

Chief, Information Department:  
Mikhail A. Portnoy

Chief, International Relations Department:  
Oleg N. Bykov

Chief, Japan Department:  
Georgiy Knaziy

Chief, Management Problems Department:  
Unknown

Chief, Mathematics Department:  
Unknown

Chief, Military Department:  
Aleksey D. Nikonov

Chief, Modeling and Forecasting Department:  
Lev M. Gromov

Chief, Peace Research Department:  
Georgiy I. Morozov

Chief, Prospects of Development and Competition Department:  
Unknown

Chief, Socialist Problems of Capitalist States Department:  
Unknown

Chief, Technical Economic Research Department:  
Vladimir I. Strigachev

Chief, USA Economy Department:  
Andrey V. Anikhin

Chief, West European Economies Department:  
Oleg V. Sal'kovskiy

Chief, World Oceans Department:  
Lev L. Lyubimov

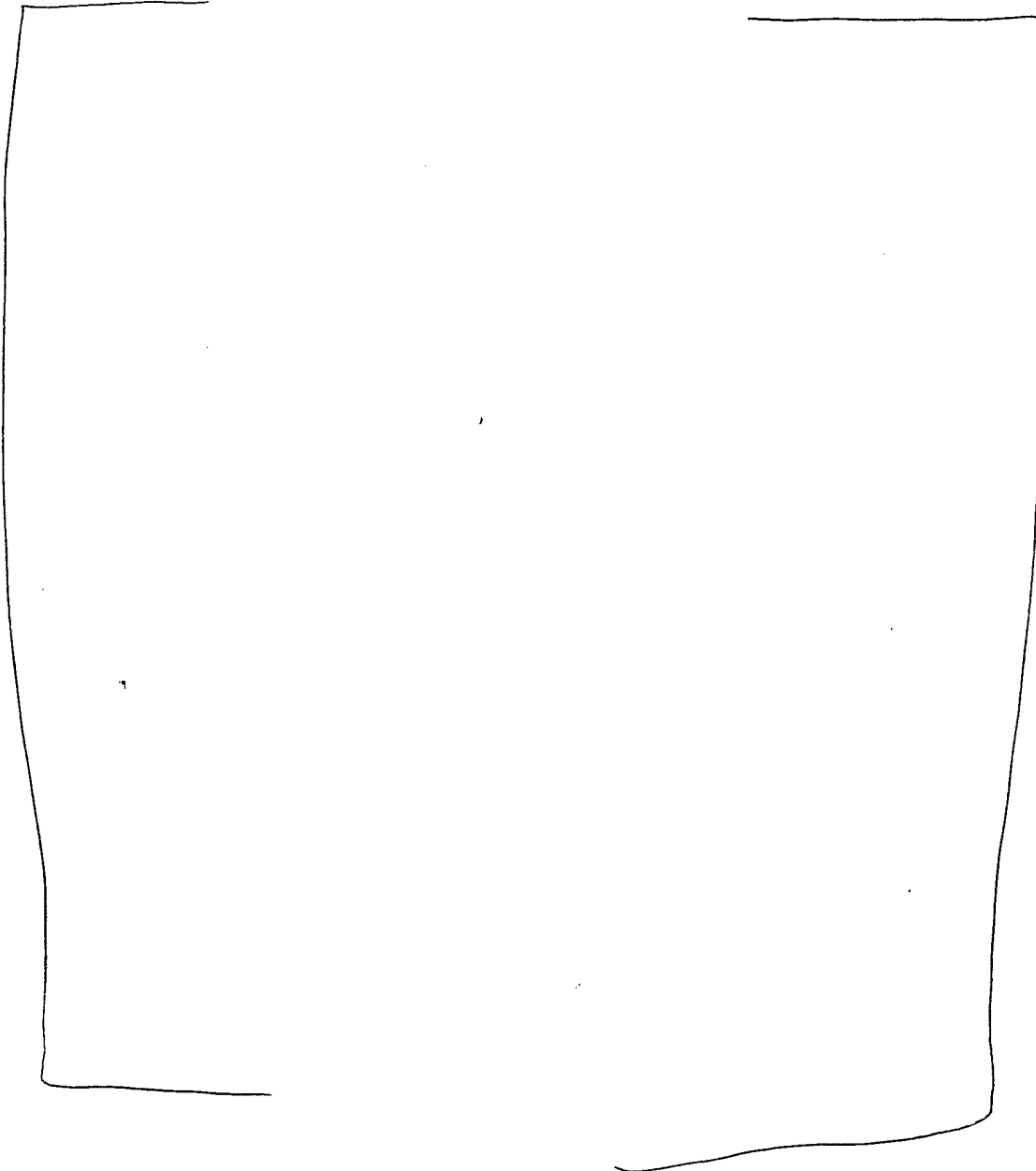
Chairman, Komsomol Committee:  
Stanislav V. Kibirskiy

Chief of Publications:  
V. T. Piskunov

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## Appendix B

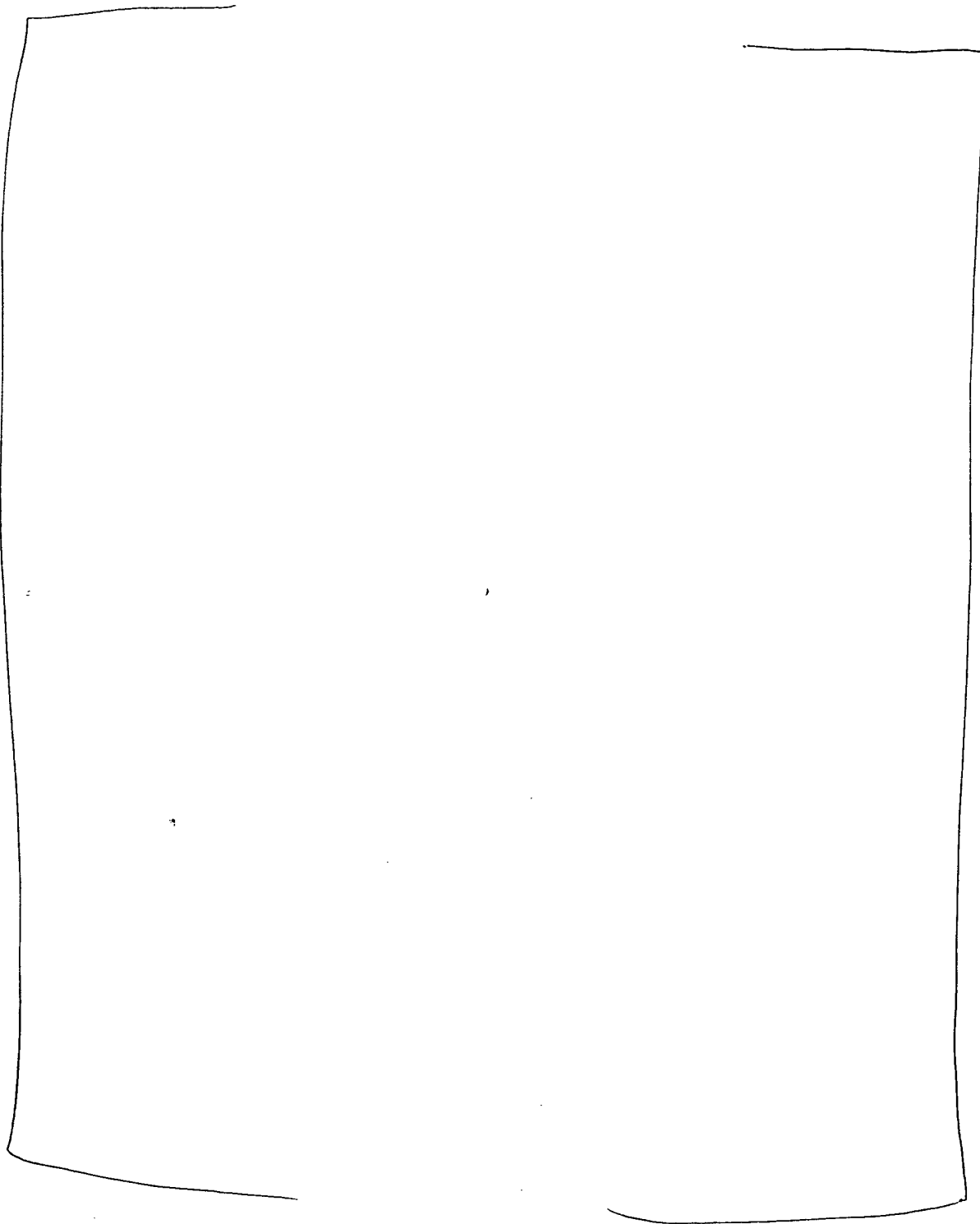
### Prominent Civilian Players in the Debate on National Security



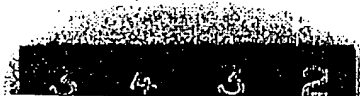
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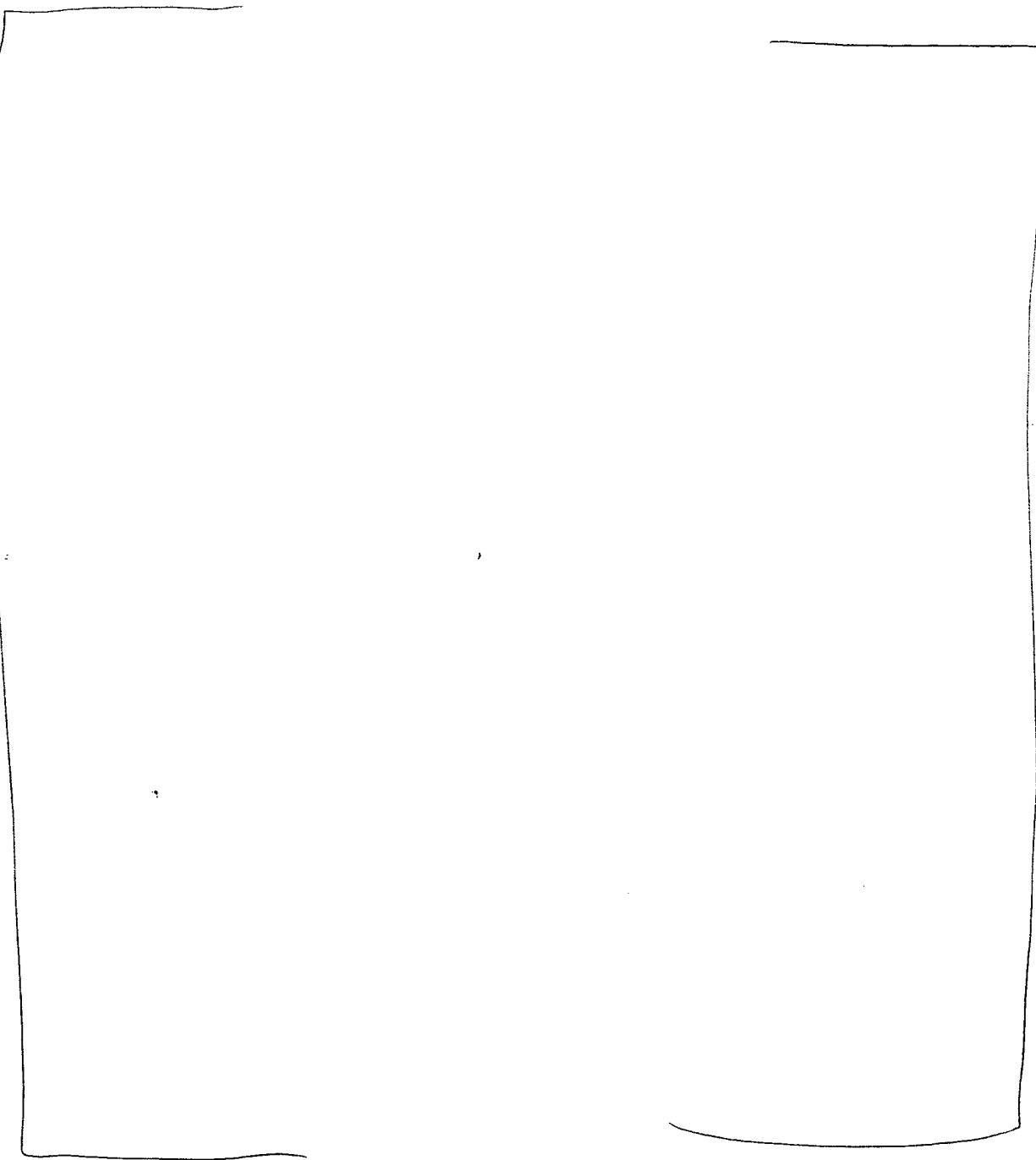
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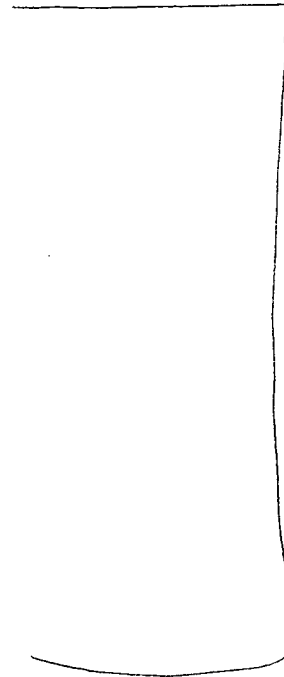
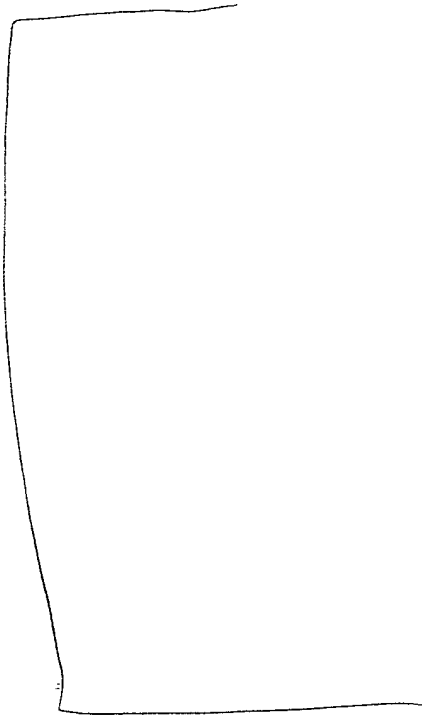
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